

Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies
The Montana Coalition

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Senate Transportation Committee Chairperson and Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide information for your consideration in how to best protect Montana's motor vehicle passengers.

Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies-MT Coalition has been dedicated to the mission of saving lives and preventing injury on Montana's highways through occupant protection public education and awareness for over a decade, and recently conducted a 3-year, statewide training program for law enforcement officers, first responders, healthcare professionals and early childhood professionals. We have served as the lead agency that oversees a statewide of local community coalitions that provide this education at the grassroots level throughout Montana. These coalitions also provide crucial resources to families by providing low-cost child restraints, along with expert help to select and install them.

The most important thing restraints do is prevent ejection. Keeping passengers in the vehicle is their primary purpose. Ejected occupants are four times as likely to die and 14 times as likely to sustain spinal cord injury. Correct restraints also contact the strongest body parts. Injury is caused by the transfer of energy to tissue. Strong and bony areas of the body are able to withstand more force than the soft tissue areas and the vital organs behind them.

Seat belts and child seats distribute force over an extensive area. By distributing forces over a wide surface area, the energy transferred is spread out rather than concentrated on an isolated area. Restraints allow the body to "ride down" crash forces with the vehicle. Vehicles are designed to crush during a crash, dissipating some of the crash energy and extending the deceleration time. By coupling the occupant to the vehicle, he or she slows down WITH the vehicle, minimizing the amount of force. Effectively protecting the head, neck and spinal cord is a crucial function. These areas of the body are vulnerable and they deserve the special attention afforded by restraint systems.

The combination of legislation, education and enforcement has proven to be the most effective way to increase use of lifesaving restraints. Appropriate and clear laws enhance the ability of law enforcement officers by providing opportunities for roadside education and referral to local resources.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration!


Bette Hall-Munger
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Patricia Carrell
State Project Coordinator

Projects of Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies, The Montana Coalition



montana
covering kids
& families

Safe & Alive Disarming Montana's Biggest Killer



A statewide message
brought to you locally by
Montana Safe Kids Safe Communities

GET THE FACTS ON MONTANA'S BIGGEST KILLER: MOTOR VEHICLE CRASH INJURY

This presentation of facts empowers Montanans to make the right personal, parental and policy choices. Using statistics and studies from the Montana Department of Transportation, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and other credible sources, it shows and tells the facts about death and injury on Montana roadways.

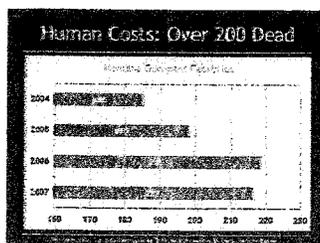
To provide a better understanding of issues that touch Montanans everyday, Safe Kids Safe Communities coalition leaders will be delivering it across the state, helping to educate people within each community.

An online video version of the presentation is also available, to supplement the community deliveries and discussions. The 16 minute video is narrated by its developers, and includes graphics, videos and facts that paint a clear picture of Montana deaths and injuries, as well as ways to prevent or reduce them. ***View the video presentation online:***

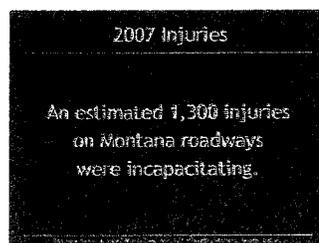
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**Basic Physics of
Vehicle Crashes**



**Human, Injury &
Economic Costs**



**Little Known Facts
That Affect Montanans**



**Restraint Choices &
Educational Resources**

Development Partners:

Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies, Montana Safe Kids Safe Communities,
Montana Seat Belt Coalition, Montana Department of Transportation

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